

Admissions Policy for Higher Education Courses (Level 4 and above) 2021/22

Policy review area	Students
Lead manager	Principal
Approval level	Board
Start date	September 2021
Review cycle	1 year
Next review	August 2022

1. Background

- 1.1 Our aim is to help students succeed and achieve their potential by ensuring they are offered a place on an appropriate course which best meets their learning needs and aspirations, widening participation, achievement and progression.
- 1.2 The guiding principles for the College's approach are:
 - To build a College community which celebrates its diversity and the contributions of a wide range of students and where all students believe they are welcome and safe.
 - The operation of transparent and consistent procedures guided by a sense of 'fairness' and the aspiration that applicants are placed on the right courses in terms of ability levels and interests.
 - To provide accurate and timely information, advice and guidance to new applicants.
- 1.3 This policy is approved by the Governing Body and reviewed annually.

2. Aims

- 2.1 Greater Brighton Metropolitan College (GBMet) is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity and we aim to ensure that all of our students are given the opportunity to achieve their potential in the higher education course they have chosen to follow. In accordance with this aim, the College is committed to recognising academic and other relevant achievements of students.
- 2.2 This policy allows the College to assure itself and others that the procedures and practices used to attract, select and recruit students are fair, transparent, systematic and consistent.

3. Scope

This policy outlines the Higher Education Admissions procedures applicable to all standard and nonstandard admissions across the College including three-year Undergraduate Degrees, Foundation Degrees, 1 year Top-up Degrees, HNC and HND courses. It applies to UK and international applicants from both within and outside the European Union. For international students, further guidance that can be found in the International Guidance Notes document. Depending on the terms in which the UK leaves the EU we may provide additional advice on EU/EEA nationals post Exit.

4. Equality and Diversity Opportunities

- 4.1 The College meets its Equality Duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different groups of people. The College's Equality and Diversity Policy demonstrates the College's vision of culture and society where human difference is anticipated and diversity celebrated routinely.
- 4.2 If a student has disclosed a learning difficulty and/or disability we are committed to using our best endeavours to make sure all the necessary arrangements and any reasonable adjustments are made prior to the start of the academic year.
- 4.3 The College proactively seeks to attract students from under-represented groups through its widening participation partnership work. The College will work to remove barriers for people accessing Higher Education courses.

5. The HE Admissions Team

- 5.1 The admissions process for potential HE students is overseen by a specialist HE Admissions Officer who has received specific training in using the UCAS system, including Clearing, and the process for admitting International students.
- 5.2 The HE Admissions Officer is supported by others in the College admissions team and by academic course tutors.
- 5.3 In addition, the College has a Widening Participation team who work in partnership with local schools and colleges to promote progression to HE; monitors the take-up of additional support; and analyses admissions data to identify take-up by under-represented groups of students; monitoring progress towards targets as described in the College's Access and Participation Plan.

6. Recruitment, Promotional and Marketing Materials

The College is committed to ensuring that prospectuses, the College website, and course publicity materials contain accurate, reliable, current and comprehensive information, are designed in a marketappropriate and accessible way, and are published in a timely manner.

7. Entry requirements

- 7.1 Conditional and unconditional offers will be in line with course entry requirements published on the course pages of the College's website, though individual offers may vary. The College has a 'typical offer', which is published online and in the prospectus.
- 7.2 The College will consider a wide range of UK and international qualifications on application, and is committed to giving full and fair consideration to all entry qualifications.
- 7.3 Interview, portfolio or audition requirements are outlined on each course page of the website and prospectus and are required in addition to qualifications.
- 7.4 Applicants whose first language is not English and who do not have GCSE in English will be asked to take an IELTS assessment or equivalent as part of their offer conditions. They will need to achieve an overall score of 6.0, with 6.0 in the writing element and 5.5 in all other sub elements. The exception to this is students who have English as a second language but have been schooled here, i.e. taken GCSE English - if they have achieved a grade D/3 they would not need to take the IELTS assessment.

8. Applications without the formal entry requirements and Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL)

- 8.1 Applicants who do not meet the formal entry requirements but who are seeking admission to a particular course on the basis of prior experience are encouraged to apply and their experience will be considered in lieu of qualifications in a process known as Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL).
- 8.2 Applicants may have already fulfilled some of the learning outcomes of the intended programme through prior experience (APEL) or certificated learning (Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning). Applicants whose prior experience or certificated learning is accredited at the Admissions stage may be admitted with academic credit which would enable students to enter at

a later stage (up to Level 5) or to omit certain modules/units. APEL is awarded as a general credit and not against any specific module.

- 8.3 For undergraduate awards, normally no credit can be awarded at Level 6, since performance at Level 6 is used as the main indicator for the determination of the classification of the honours degree.

9. Admission of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

- 9.1 The College welcomes applicants with a disability and/or learning difficulty to disclose information about their condition as early as possible in the application process.
- 9.2 The College has a legal obligation not to discriminate against applicants who are disabled for reasons related to their disability; however, there are some cases where a pre-offer assessment will be necessary. The pre-offer assessment will determine the level of reasonable adjustments required and the College's ability to meet those.
- 9.3 Where complex needs, diagnosed disabilities and/or difficulties or health needs are indicated within an application or appear to be evident during the admission process, the application will be overseen by the Disability Coordinator/Head of Additional Learning Support in consultation with other relevant College specialists to conduct a pre-offer assessment of individual needs and the appropriateness of the College in meeting the student's needs.
- 9.4 The Disability Coordinator/ALS Manager will contact relevant specialists who will coordinate the assessment of the student's needs in conjunction with the curriculum department.
- 9.5 In all cases, where there are significant mobility limitations (in particular, but not exclusively involving wheelchairs) the Health and Safety Manager will be contacted. The Health and Safety Manager will consult relevant specialists within the College for specialist advice.
- 9.6 In all cases, needs, abilities and risks are to be assessed, as well as the College's ability to address these matters appropriately. The Head of Curriculum should ensure that all documents relating to this assessment are retained.
- 9.7 If an applicant discloses a learning difficulty or disability as part of the application process the student can apply for Disabled Students allowance (DSA) via their Student Finance funding body (e.g. Student Finance England) so that an assessment of need can be undertaken. The Disability Coordinator will support a student with their DSA application if required.
- 9.8 The decision about whether or not the College can admit a student with complex needs should be sanctioned by the Director of Student Services & Support in consultation with the relevant Head of Learning. The reasons for the decision should be recorded, whether the decision is positive or negative.
- 9.9 Any decision not to admit a student may be appealed against using the HE Admissions Appeals Procedure.
- 9.10 The College will always use 'best endeavours' to meet the needs of students.

10. Selection, offers and confirmation

- 10.1 Applicants will need to apply through UCAS or clearing if they wish to apply for more than one

institution. This excludes teacher training and all part-time HE courses for which application is made direct to the College. If an applicant wants to apply only to GBMet, then they are able to apply via a direct application.

Current GBMet Level 3 applicants who are only applying to the MET and who are applying through the 'Progression Promise' scheme also do not need to apply through UCAS and apply through a direct route.

Application for internal progression from a Foundation Degree to a Top-up Degree is also a direct process where GBMet is the current Foundation Degree students' only choice. The internal application deadline dates will mirror UCAS deadline dates.

10.2 The full-time course application timeline is:

- October-November: Open days during the Autumn Term. FE Tutors work with HE applicants on UCAS applications.
- January: UCAS application deadline in January. Interviews and auditions. Internal applicants encouraged to apply for student finance.
- February-May: Late applications (including those added through UCAS Extra), interviews and auditions. UCAS will give applicants a deadline date by which the applicant must accept offers.
- July-August: UCAS clearing.

10.3 Both UCAS and direct applicants will receive confirmation of the receipt of their application and ongoing communication about admissions and enrolment.

10.4 At any point throughout the application process, applicants are entitled to receive information and advice from the HE Admissions Team Student Financial Support and information relating to additional learning support. Applicants can also access impartial advice and guidance from the National Careers Service Helpline on 0800 100 900. More information about the National Careers Service can be found at www.directgov.uk

10.5 Interviewing tutors may determine an applicant's suitability by means of an interview, audition, academic assessment, portfolio and/or consideration of prior learning by experience or qualification. There will also be a mandatory 1-1 'application review meeting' with internal Level 3 applicants. To ensure consistency and fairness interviewing tutors will follow a minimum standard requirement when setting entry academic assessments and auditions.

11. Interviews

11.1 An applicant's suitability will be determined by means of an interview, application review meeting, audition, academic assessment, portfolio and/or APEL.

11.2 Invitation to interview will be via College letter or email. The invitation will include the date, time, duration and location of the interview, what to prepare and if a portfolio is required.

11.3 Appropriate facilities are in place to ensure that applicants are able to disclose their learning difficulties and/or disabilities and other barriers to learning. Support is available throughout the application to enrolment process; e.g. signers for deaf applicants or adapted materials for applicants with visual impairments. In all cases, needs, abilities and risks will be assessed, via a pre-offer assessment, as well as the College's ability to support these matters appropriately. The Head of Learning will ensure that all documents relating to the pre-offer assessment are retained.

In cases where an applicant has significant mobility limitations, the Health and Safety Manager may consult a College specialist for specialist advice prior to an offer being made.

- 11.4 Interviews, auditions and APEL will be conducted by trained academic course tutors utilising College systems.

12. Offers

- 12.1 The notification of all decisions will be via UCAS unless the applicant has applied directly to the College, in which case it will be by email.
- 12.2 If an applicant attends an interview, the College aims to confirm the decision via UCAS within five working days. Where this is not possible, the interviewing tutor will advise the applicant how long it will take for them to be notified.
- 12.3 If an application is successful, the interviewing tutor will make one of two types of offer: unconditional or conditional. Where appropriate, conditions may be placed on an offer if an applicant is currently studying towards academic qualifications. This is to give the applicant the time they may need to meet the entry requirements. If an applicant has already achieved the entry requirements an unconditional offer may be made.
- 12.4 Where HE applications exceed the number of places available, applicants will follow UCAS procedures for referral to another institution.
- 12.5 Some courses may require additional declarations by the applicant relating to their health, criminal convictions and cautions. These special requirements are often imposed by law, professional, regulatory and statutory bodies or other third parties. Students applying for certain types of courses, such as the PGCE, must comply with additional entry requirements such as a check for criminal convictions (via the Disclosure and Barring Service). Failure to comply with any such requirements will result in an applicant not being permitted to start the course or being required to leave the course and/or the College.
- 12.6 If an applicant is not to be offered a place on the HE course they have applied for, it must be agreed by the relevant Head of Learning via the Interview Report Form signed by the interviewer.

13. Responding to an offer of a place

- 13.1 Once a student has received a decision from the College, they will need to respond within the deadline set by UCAS. Applicants can choose to accept one offer as their firm (first) choice and one as their insurance (second) choice.
- 13.2 Offers made to internal HE applicants must be accepted by the deadline stipulated by the HE Admissions Officer.

14. Confirming a conditional offer of a place on the course

- 14.1 If an applicant is made a conditional offer, the final stage of the application process takes place after the publication of examination results. If an applicant achieves the entry requirements as stated in the conditional offer, the place will be confirmed via UCAS. Should an applicant not meet the conditions of their offer, a final decision will be made on the basis of their interview/audition, examination results, number of places remaining and any other relevant information.

14.2 All conditions must be met by the deadline given by UCAS (usually the end of August) this also applies to applicants who have chosen to defer their entry.

15. Criminal Convictions

The College recognises the contribution that people with criminal records can make and welcomes applications from them. A person's criminal record will not, in itself, prevent that person from being offered a place on the chosen course. Any information given will be treated in the strictest confidence. Suitable applicants will not be refused a place on a course because of offences which are not relevant to, and do not place them at or make them a risk in, the course for which they are applying.

Applying for courses that are covered by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

For applications to courses covered by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, the College requires applicants to disclose any 'unspent' convictions and 'unspent' conditional cautions. The college is also required to know if the applicant is currently subject to a criminal investigation, facing a pending prosecution and also if an applicant is currently being supervised by the youth offending team or probation. This information is provided by applicants completing a criminal records disclosure form issued by the admissions team. Further information will be sought from applicants who disclose and risk assessments will be undertaken.

If applicants are unsure about how to provide the information requested, support can be provided by contacting Nacro's Criminal Record Support Service on 0300 123 1999 or helpline@nacro.org.uk. All enquiries to this service are confidential and applicants will not be asked for any personal details (unless information or advice is requested to be sent)

For further information on how long it takes for convictions and conditional cautions to be spent, please refer to Nacro's guide on the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act by visiting <https://www.nacro.org.uk/criminal-record-support-service/support-for-individuals/disclosing-criminal-records/rehabilitation-offenders-act/>

Applying for courses that are 'exempt' from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

Courses exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 usually require the completion of a work placement in order to achieve the qualification. Work placements in childcare, working with vulnerable adults, health care, teaching, accounting and the legal system require a criminal record check appropriate to the role / course applied for. Criminal records checks take place through the Disclosure and Barring Service (formerly the Criminal Records Bureau). Some work placements may require an enhanced DBS check.

For applications to courses that are 'exempt' from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, the College requires applicants to disclose any 'spent' / 'unspent' convictions and adult cautions that are not protected (i.e. that are not filtered out) as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (as amended in 2020). This information is provided by applicants completing a criminal records disclosure form issued by the admissions team. Further information will be sought from applicants who disclose and risk assessments will be undertaken.

If applicants are unsure about how to provide the information requested, support can be provided by contacting Nacro's Criminal Record Support Service on 0300 123 1999 or helpline@nacro.org.uk. All enquiries to this service are confidential and applicants are not asked for any personal details (unless information or advice is requested to be sent).

For further information and clarity on 'filtering', please visit <https://www.nacro.org.uk/criminal-record-support-service/support-for-individuals/disclosing-criminal-records/disclosing-criminal-records-applying-college>

When applications with criminal convictions are made a safeguarding panel review the application (chaired by the MET principal) to assess risk rating. Once the application is reviewed at the panel, the college will decide if an offer to the course can be made.

16. Course Closure and Change of Location

16.1. Where a course is under-subscribed the College reserves the right to withdraw the course in line with its Student Protection Plan. In such cases, applicants will be offered advice on the availability of alternative courses, both at the College and with other local education providers. However, the offer of a place cannot be guaranteed.

16.2. The College reserves the right to change the location of courses

17. Clearing

If an applicant does not meet the entry requirements of their firm or insurance choice and therefore is not holding any offers, they will automatically enter Clearing. This process starts immediately after the examination results are published and allows applicants to apply for another course where places have not yet been filled. UCAS and other national publications will be notified of these places by the College. These places will also be advertised on the College website.

18. Data protection

Information concerning applicants remains confidential to those processing the application. Where a reference may be requested by the College, the referee will be informed that the applicant is entitled to read any reference that may be supplied.

We collect personal information about applicants in order to process course applications. Primarily, personal data is used for:

- Administrative services, such as course registration and arranging interviews.
- The provision of student support services and other student guidance.

When we do collect personal data, we are regulated under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and we are responsible as 'controller' of that personal information for the purposes of those laws. A full Privacy Notice outlining the categories of student information that we collect, hold and share; why we collect and use this information; the lawful basis on which we use this information and why we share student information is provided to all applicants and enrolling students.

19. Enrolment

If an applicant accepts their offer of a place at the College, they will be sent an enrolment form to complete. They will also be sent a link to online information, which includes kit lists and start dates. The enrolment form should be completed and returned to the College as soon as possible to ensure a place is held for the applicant.

20. Deferred Entry

The College does accept applications for a deferred entry (for one year only). Applicants should include a brief outline in the personal statement of the reason(s) for their deferral. Applicants will be interviewed/auditioned as described in this Policy.

21. Transferring mid-year and/or end of year

Greater Brighton Metropolitan College facilitates transfers between HE providers; students will need to apply through UCAS and provide official transcripts detailing the modules completed and their credit value. This will be assessed by the tutor to decide whether a transfer is possible.

To enter the start of Year 2 / level 5 students will need 120 credits, to enter the start of year 3 / level 6 students will need 240 credits. Students will also be required to attend an interview/audition and present a portfolio of work.

22. Student Financial Support

22.1 Applicants may be eligible to claim financial assistance.

22.2 Funding is available through Student Finance England as follows:

- Tuition fee loan (available to all eligible students)
- Maintenance loan (a basic amount is available to all eligible students regardless of income. An additional amount will be means tested)
- Additional help for students with children or dependent adults:
 - Childcare grant
 - Parents Learning Allowance
 - Adult Dependents Grant
- Disabled Students Allowance (for students who have a disability, long-term health condition, mental health condition or specific learning difficulty - such as dyslexia).
- Bursaries may also be available directly from the College, check the website for details.

23. Reasons why an applicant may not be offered a place on their chosen course

The College aims to provide a course that meets individual needs and abilities. An applicant will not be admitted to a course if:

- Applicants do not meet the relevant entry criteria and if the interviewing tutor is not satisfied that the applicant is academically suitable for the course . Further refusal of entry or mandatory withdrawal, if enrolled, may also occur if an applicant provides false information.
- Applicants have a criminal conviction which prevents them from certain areas of work and they wish to follow a course which would normally lead to that type of work.
- The student is a progressing student and has formally, via the College's student disciplinary process, been found to have breached the code of conduct for behaviour, attendance and/or work performance.
- The applicant has outstanding debt/s with the College.
- The course is oversubscribed and all available places have been offered.
- The course is undersubscribed and is withdrawn.
- The needs of the applicant cannot be supported despite the College's best endeavours.

24. HE Admissions Appeal Procedure

- 24.1 Unsuccessful applicants will be given feedback on the reasons for non-selection upon request.
- 24.2 Applicants will be advised in the College's initial acknowledgement email or letter, that if they are rejected and require further feedback, this can be requested via the HE Admissions team.
- 24.3 The HE Admissions team will refer this to the curriculum staff involved in interviewing or auditioning the applicant.
- 24.4 Any decision not to admit an applicant may be appealed on the grounds that:
- There is evidence of procedural irregularity (i.e. the College has not adhered to its own Admissions Policy).
 - There is new or additional information that Admissions and/or Curriculum staff were not aware of that is pertinent to the application.
 - There has been perceived bias or prejudice in the decision-making.
- 24.5 Formal appeals should be made in writing within 15 working days of the issue of the notification of the admissions decision and be addressed to the Higher Education Development and Compliance Officer. Appeals correspondence must identify the grounds for the appeal.
- 24.6 The Higher Education Development and Compliance Officer will log the appeal and acknowledge its receipt within 5 working days. The circumstances surrounding the admissions decision will be investigated by the Higher Education Development and Compliance Officer or nominee within 15 working days. At the end of the investigation the Higher Education Development and Compliance Officer will write to the applicant with the outcome and actions resulting from the appeal.
- 24.7 The applicant has the right to request a review of the outcome of the appeal. This must be requested within 10 working days of the date of the outcome response by writing to the Director of Curriculum Development & Digital. All reviews will be assigned to a member of the College's Senior Leadership Team.
- 24.8 Any other complaints about aspects of the recruitment, selection, and/or admissions process will be dealt with under the College's Complaints Policy. All communications in the first instance should be addressed to Complaints at complaints@gbmc.ac.uk

25. Additional Information

- 25.1 Applicants are required by UCAS to declare criminal convictions that are not spent and/or court proceedings at the time of application or if applying direct to the College declare this on the direct application form. If the Admissions Tutor recommends that an offer be made; such applications will be referred for consideration by the College Safeguarding Officer. The Safeguarding Officer's assessment will take place independently of the academic selection process, which is based entirely on academic merit and takes place in accordance with this policy.
- 25.2 Applications submitted via UCAS are subject to the anti-fraud procedures and checks carried out by UCAS. All personal statements submitted via UCAS are subject to the UCAS similarity detection procedure. Where a personal statement contains significant similarities to another previously submitted to UCAS the College is notified of this and of the extent of the similarity.
- 25.3 All applications highlighted by the UCAS Similarity Detection Service are sent to the Admissions Tutor for consideration. If the Admissions Tutor wishes to make a conditional or unconditional offer, the applicant may be invited to submit a revised personal statement by a specific date,

normally within two weeks of the request. On receipt of the revised personal statement the application will be reviewed by the Admissions Tutor and a selection decision will be made in accordance with standard procedures.

- 25.4 The College reserves the right to cancel courses where under-recruitment affects the financial viability of a course or where national, regional or strategic objectives require. Notification will be made at the earliest date and, where possible, an alternative course will be offered at the College or partner providers, in line with the College's Student Protection Plan.
- 25.5 The College accepts that it is not possible to plan for every situation which might arise in the admission process but strives to ensure that it provides a fair and equitable service to all prospective students